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# Three Worlds of Welfare Chauvinism? How Welfare Regimes Affect Support for Distributing Welfare to Immigrants in Europe

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ABSTRACT *Analyzing the 2008 wave of the European Social Survey, this study assesses whether an elaborate institutional theory is able to explain why levels of welfare chauvinism differ among welfare regimes. As expected, native populations in liberal and conservative welfare regimes prove more reluctant to distributing welfare services to immigrants than those in social-democratic ones. Adding country-level data, it is demonstrated that neither differences in the selectivity nor differences in employment protection and unemployment levels can explain these varying levels of welfare chauvinism. Instead, regime differences in welfare chauvinism can be fully attributed to their differences in income inequality.*



## Introduction

A common idea among scholars of politics and policy is that extensive and universal welfare regimes result in a stronger sense of solidarity and more tolerance towards outgroups among majority populations than do residual ones. Such assertions can already be found in classical readings on the welfare state by Marshall (1950) and Titmuss (1968), and several studies have empirically tested these arguments by comparing the opinions of people living in welfare regimes that differ in the level of generosity and the extent of decommodification. Most of these comparisons are based on Esping-Andersen's well-known typology of welfare regimes

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(1990). These by and large expect that social-democratic welfare states result in the highest levels of solidarity and tolerance among their majority populations, followed by conservative and liberal ones respectively (cf. Dallinger 2010). Although research along these lines has produced scattered findings (for overviews, see Jaeger 2006, 2009), a clear pattern is found in studies focusing on opinions about welfare policies in the "narrow sense" (cf. Larsen 2006, 2008): majority populations in liberal welfare regimes are on average less supportive of policies directed at the poor and the unemployed than those in conservative regimes, and especially less than those in social-democratic ones (see e.g. Jaeger 2009).

Such studies seem to fit in an institutional approach to politics, which is informed by the idea that political preferences and attitudes are shaped by political institutions, whose endogenous nature is emphasized (March and Olsen 1996). This has been recognized by Christian Albrekt Larsen (2006, 2008), who concluded that commonly used theories – "power resource theory", "new politics theory", and "culture theory" – proved to be remarkably impotent for explaining why people in liberal welfare states are least supportive of welfare directed at the poor and the unemployed. He has therefore formulated and tested a different, "institutional line of reasoning", which combines insights from welfare regime theory as formulated by Marshall (1950) and Titmuss (1968, 1974; cf. Myles and Quadagno 2002), with theorizing on deservingness criteria (cf. Van Oorschot 2000). The overall idea is that "the institutional structure of the different welfare regimes influences or – using another terminology – frames the way the public perceives the poor and the unemployed" (Larsen 2008: 148). More specifically, Larsen has demonstrated that the institutional structure of three different welfare regimes affects the extent to which the public perceives the poor and unemployed as (1) deviant, (2) in need of welfare, and (3) in control of their own situation. These three "deservingness criteria" in turn influence whether or not the poor and unemployed are considered to be entitled to welfare.

While this specific branch of institutional theory has already proven its merits when it comes to explaining views on the poor and the unemployed, it also seems promising when it comes to opinions on the deservingness of another group holding a minority position, immigrants. A salient discussion in the literature focuses on immigrants' entitlements to welfare arrangements. In all European countries, although to a varying degree, the public at large considers immigrants less entitled to welfare benefits and services than the native population (Van Oorschot 2006). Various studies have assessed the antecedents of this sentiment, which has been aptly summarized by Andersen and Bjørklund as the idea that "welfare services should be restricted to 'our own'" (1990: 212). Their label, "welfare chauvinism", has become the standard term for the opinion that immigrants are less entitled to welfare benefits and services than the native population (cf. Van der Waal et al. 2010; Mewes and Mau 2012; Reeskens and Van Oorschot 2012; De Koster et al. 2013).[1]

In the light of Larsen's formulation of institutional theory, this raises the question of whether three worlds of welfare chauvinism can be distinguished: are the native populations of liberal welfare states most reluctant to distribute welfare benefits and services to immigrants, followed by natives living in conservative welfare states, while those living under social-democratic regimes are most willing to do so? And, if so, can this pattern be explained in accordance with the mechanisms addressed in Larsen's theory? Before we turn to our empirical analyses, we must first discuss this theory in more detail.

## An Institutional Theory of Welfare Chauvinism

By and large, the specific branch of institutional theory formulated by Larsen (2006) ranks liberal, conservative and social-democratic welfare regimes on three dimensions. The first one is the "selectivity dimension", which indicates the extent to which a welfare regime is universal. The second dimension indicates the extent to which a welfare regime reduces market-driven inequalities between "the rich" and "the poor". While Larsen refers to this dimension as the "generosity dimension", we will denote it as the "inequality dimension" in order to avoid conceptual confusion that could arise from the generosity label, which is often employed with a different meaning in the literature on welfare arrangements (e.g. referring to the share of the population that is covered by these, see Scruggs 2004). The third dimension, "labor-market trajectory", addresses the extent to which a welfare regime creates labor-market opportunities for the least skilled. These three dimensions are thought to affect the three deservingness criteria – deviance, need and control – that guide the opinions of the majority population concerning whether or not (potential) welfare recipients are entitled to welfare. First we discuss the selectivity and inequality dimensions, and later we consider the labor-market trajectory dimension.

Before we do so, it should be noted that Larsen's model is a simplified representation of a complex reality, just as any theory is. It is, after all, plausible that welfare regimes do not unidirectionally shape public opinions: public opinions most likely also affect welfare arrangements. Nevertheless, strong theoretical arguments have been made in favor of the causal direction implied by Larsen's model (see Rothstein and Stolle 2008), and recent research (Raven et al. 2011) demonstrates that the direction of the relationship differs between policy domains. Public opinion only informs public policies if these are new and not yet institutionalized, whereas the relationship is reversed in the case of highly institutionalized welfare arrangements. The latter do affect public opinions, which supports the assumption underlying the theoretical model under scrutiny.

### *The Impact of the Selectivity and Inequality Dimensions on the Deviance Criterion*

The selectively and inequality dimensions rank welfare regimes in a way that resembles the classic ideas of Marshall (1950) and Titmuss (1968). On the basis of the selectivity dimension, welfare regimes are ordered by the extent to which they are characterized by selective – "means tested" – programmatic structures of benefits and services instead of universal ones. The inequality dimension ranks welfare regimes by the level of inequality that results from their programmatic structures. These two dimensions result in the following order: liberal (most selective; most unequal), conservative (medium selective; medium unequal), and social-democratic welfare regimes (least selective; least unequal). Liberal regimes merely provide welfare for the most needy which leads to the highest levels of inequality between the rich and poor. Social-democratic ones include benefits and services for large parts of the population and are characterized by the lowest levels of inequality between the rich and poor. Conservative regimes rank in-between on both dimensions (Rothstein 1998; Larsen 2006).

The selectivity and inequality dimensions are theorized to influence opinions on the deservingness of (potential) welfare recipients, because both affect the extent to which majority populations consider them to be deviant. The underlying mechanisms are, however, different. In the case of the *selectivity* dimension, it is important to note that

"the very act of separating out the needy almost always stamps them as socially inferior, as 'others' with other types of social characteristics and needs" (Rothstein 1998: 158). The framing implied by selective welfare services thus decreases the extent to which majority populations perceive welfare recipients as "one of us". Selective programmatic structures of benefits and services furthermore draw a sharper and more easily discernible line between those who benefit from the welfare state and those who do not. As a result, "the needy" and "the poor" are clearly separated from other citizens in public debates on welfare, aggravating the us-versus-them divide (cf. Larsen 2007: 87–88). The selectivity of welfare services consequently makes it harder for majority populations to identify with the poor and those in need – with "those people" (Rothstein 1998: 157) – and the former are consequently more likely to consider the latter a "public burden" (Titmuss 1968: 129), deviant, and therefore undeserving of welfare.

The *inequality* dimension is also assumed to affect the extent to which majority populations consider (potential) welfare recipients as deviant. The crucial difference with the selectivity dimension is, however, that the inequality dimension does not involve frames embedded in the institutional make-up of welfare regimes. Instead, the explanation lies in the different outcomes brought about by different welfare regimes. The underlying idea is that some welfare states mitigate income inequality more strongly than others, while "reduced differences in economic resources between 'the majority' and 'the bottom' of society generate more similar living styles, as a consequence making it easier for 'the bottom' to fulfill the identity criterion" (Larsen 2006: 57). Put differently, welfare states that diminish market-driven inequalities least are most likely to result in strongly articulated social divisions between the rich and poor – resulting in "two nations", instead of one (cf. Titmuss 1968: 122). In such welfare states, the rich hardly identify themselves with the poor, and they are, therefore, more likely to consider the latter deviant, and thus less entitled to welfare.

Whereas these ideas about the selectivity and the inequality dimensions have originally been developed with the poor and the unemployed in mind, several research findings suggest that both dimensions might also be relevant for explaining different levels of welfare chauvinism. In the first place, studies of opinions related to the rather general question of whether immigrants should get the same rights as natives or citizens (Mau and Burkhardt 2009) and of views pertaining to the question of whether immigrants take away jobs and are a burden for the welfare state (Crepaz and Damron 2009) find similar patterns to those addressing views on the poor and the unemployed. Even though these studies do not focus on welfare chauvinism,[2] and although Mau and Burkhardt (2009) use a typology that differs from Esping-Andersen's, their results suggest that native populations in social-democratic welfare regimes take a more inclusive stance towards immigrants and are less concerned about "negative" labor-market and welfare effects of immigration than those in liberal ones.

In the second place, the identity criterion that intermediates the impact of the selectivity and inequality of welfare regimes on the perceived deservingness of the poor and unemployed – that of deviance – seems to be applicable to immigrants, too (cf. Larsen 2006: 49). Universal welfare regimes are likely to obstruct the marking out of immigrants in discussions on welfare, and welfare regimes producing low levels of income inequality are likely to hamper identifying immigrants as deviant due to poor living conditions.

The above gives rise to two hypotheses. First, we expect that differences in the extent to which majority populations living under liberal, conservative and social-democratic

welfare regimes consider immigrants to be entitled to welfare services can be explained by differences in the selectivity of these regimes (*hypothesis 1*). Second, we expect that such differences in welfare chauvinism can be explained by differences in inequality among the populations of these welfare states (*hypothesis 2*).

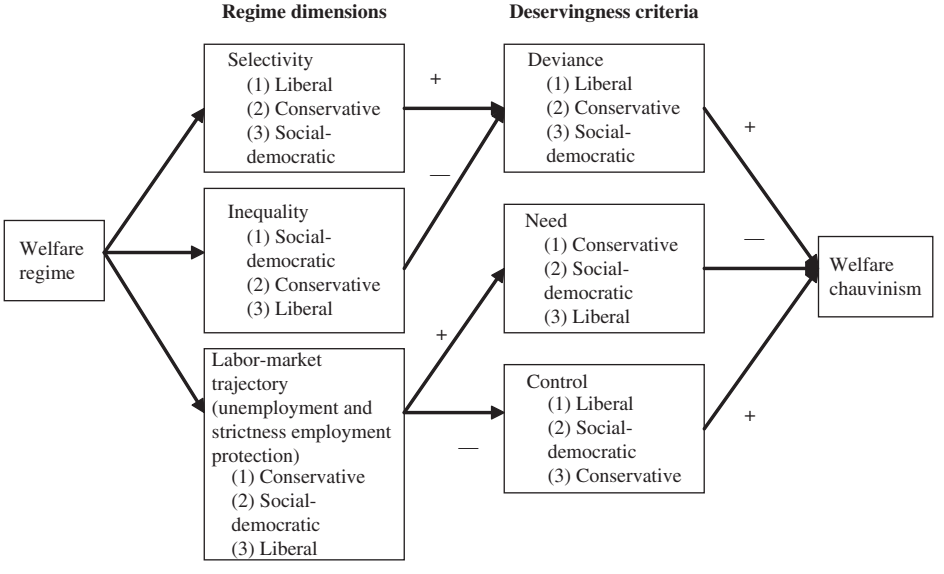
### *The Impact of the Labor-Market Trajectory on the Need and Control Criteria*

The labor-market trajectory is the third dimension of welfare regimes that affects the opinion of the majority about the poor and the unemployed (Larsen 2006) and possibly about immigrants as well. It is theorized that this dimension relates to the deservingness criteria of "need" and "control". More specifically, it influences the extent to which the poor and the unemployed are thought to be in need of welfare benefits and services and the extent to which majority populations perceive them to be in control of their own situation.

When it comes to the "need" criterion, it is important that the institutional make-up of liberal, conservative and social-democratic welfare regimes results in differences in job opportunities at the bottom of their labor markets (Esping-Andersen 1990). The deregulated liberal welfare regimes have low wage levels and consequently yield high labor demand for low-skilled service workers in the private sector. Social-democratic welfare regimes are also characterized by high labor demand for low-skilled service workers, albeit in the public, instead of the private, sector. Conservative regimes, on the other hand, do not yield high demand for service workers –in the private or the public sector – as these are directed at protecting sole-wage-earner families. Referring to Esping-Andersen, Larsen explains this as follows: "conservative regimes followed a labour reduction route. It did not boost employment in the service sector, but instead protected the male insider against the risk of unemployment through strict job protection and early retirement schemes" (2006: 59). Clearly, then, as compared to conservative welfare regimes, liberal and social-democratic ones are characterized by more job opportunities at the bottom of the labor market that enable people to be self-supportive instead of dependent on welfare benefits and services (see for findings corroborating this suggestion: Raveaud 2007). Therefore, majority populations in liberal and social-democratic regimes most likely perceive the unemployed as less in *need* of welfare services, and consequently as less entitled to welfare, than majority populations in conservative welfare regimes do.

The second mechanism is not about need, but about the extent to which (potential) welfare recipients are considered to be in *control* of their own situation. The basic argument here is that employment regulation, which substantially decreases the extent to which jobseekers are likely to be successful, is most strict in social-democratic and conservative welfare regimes (cf. Lindbeck and Snower 1988). First, working conditions in social-democratic and conservative welfare regimes are hardly open to negotiation. Liberal ones, in contrast, facilitate such negotiations and enable the unemployed to reduce their wage demands. The unemployed in liberal regimes are consequently more in control of their own situation than those in social-democratic and conservative ones. Second, the protection of "insiders" on the labor market – i.e. those who already have a steady job – is strongest in conservative regimes, followed by social-democratic and liberal ones. If insiders on the labor market are more protected, the unemployed face more difficulties in finding employment. Hence, the institutional make-up of liberal welfare regimes leaves the unemployed more in control over their own situation than those in social-democratic and conservative ones.

**Figure 1.** The institutional theory of welfare chauvinism




Extending these theoretical arguments to views on the welfare entitlements of immigrants, we can formulate two additional hypotheses. We expect that differences in the extent to which majority populations in liberal, conservative and social-democratic welfare regimes consider immigrants to be entitled to welfare services can be explained by differences in unemployment levels (*hypothesis 3*). In addition, we expect that such differences in welfare chauvinism can be explained by differences in the strictness of employment protection (*hypothesis 4*).

Figure 1 summarizes the institutional theory of welfare chauvinism outlined above. On the left-hand side, it shows that welfare regimes differ on three dimensions: (1) *selectivity*, ranging from residual or means-tested to universal; (2) *inequality*, indicating the level of income inequality; and (3) *labor-market trajectory*, indicating the extent to which regimes offer employment opportunities. For each of these dimensions, the expected rank order of the three welfare regimes is indicated. The next column displays rank orders on the three deservingness criteria: (1) *deviance*, indicating the extent to which majority populations consider immigrants to be deviant; (2) *need*, representing the extent to which majority populations perceive immigrants to be in need of welfare services; and (3) *control*, indicating the extent to which those populations perceive immigrants to be in control over their own employment situation.

## Research Format, Data and Operationalization

Our hypotheses will be tested by means of multilevel modeling on a dataset that combines individual-level data of the *European Social Survey* (ESS 2008) with country-level data retrieved from various sources. To our knowledge the ESS 2008 is the only internationally comparative dataset containing a measure of welfare chauvinism. The country-level data

needed for testing our hypotheses could not be retrieved for all countries in the ESS, but ten countries for which such data are available can be categorized according to Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes. Our categorization is in accordance with that of Larsen (2006: 68) in formulating the institutional theory addressed in this article. In addition to five social-democratic regimes (Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) and three conservative ones (Belgium, France and Germany),[3] there are only two liberal welfare regimes in the dataset: Ireland and the United Kingdom. Note, however, that those are the only two liberal welfare regimes in Europe.

Since our study deals with majority populations' opinions concerning the welfare entitlements of immigrants, we focus on native respondents: respondents not born in their country of residence and respondents who have at least one parent who was not born in their country of birth and residence are excluded from the analyses.

Furthermore, due to lack of data suitable for measuring public opinions on the three deservingness criteria depicted in Figure 1, we are – just like Larsen (2006: 74–77) – compelled by necessity to test our hypotheses merely by means of data on the regime dimensions that according to the institutional theory on welfare attitudes inform opinions on deservingness.



### *Country-Level Variables*

*Selectivity* is measured by means of the coverage of welfare services – i.e. the share of the population covered by these services – provided by Scruggs's (2004) well-known and widely used *Comparative Welfare Entitlement Dataset*. Its mean regime scores are as expected: liberal (25.90), conservative (28.53), social-democratic (35.48). Country scores have been inverted so that the variable indicates *selectivity* instead of universality.[4]

We measure *inequality* in two ways. For measuring *inequality I* we use the Gini coefficient of each country in the year 2007/2008 (United Nations Development Program 2007). A higher Gini coefficient indicates a wider income gap, and mean regime scores are ranked as expected: (1) liberal (35.95), (2) conservative (31.33), (3) social-democratic (26.66). *Inequality II* is measured by means of the 80/20 ratio, which indicates the ratio between the income share of the top 20 per cent and the bottom 20 per cent of the income distribution for each country (Eurostat s.d.a). Higher scores on this variable also indicate more inequality, and mean regime scores are also ranked in accordance to our expectations: (1) liberal (5.00), (2) conservative (4.40), (3) social-democratic (3.72).

*Unemployment* is used to indicate a general lack of job opportunities at the bottom of the labor market. It is measured as the unemployment level in each country in the year 2008 (Eurostat, s.d.b). Higher scores stand for higher unemployment levels, and thus fewer job opportunities at the bottom of the labor market, indicating that there are fewer possibilities for sustaining oneself instead of relying on welfare. As predicted by Larsen (2006), the highest level of unemployment can indeed be found in the conservative regimes (mean score 7.36), as unemployment levels in liberal (mean score 5.95) and social-democratic ones (mean score 4.24) are lower.

For each country, *strictness of employment protection* is measured as the degree of employment protection along

> 21 basic items which can be classified in three main areas: (I) protection of regular workers against individual dismissal; (II) regulation of temporary forms of

> employment; and (III) specific requirements for collective dismissals. The information refers to employment protection provided through legislation and as a result of enforcement processes. (OECD, s.d.).[5]

A higher score indicates that employment protection is stricter, and average regime scores are in line with our expectations: (1) conservative (2.79), (2) social-democratic (1.82), (3) liberal (0.50).

To properly test the empirical validity of the institutional theory outlined above, there is need to control for the primary competing theory: that of ethnic heterogeneity (Alesina and Glaeser 2004). Roughly put, this theory holds that there is less support for economic redistribution in liberal welfare regimes because their more ethnically heterogeneous character undermines the social solidarity that underlies this support. Hence, we will control for the *share of non-western immigrants* in each country (Schneider 2008) in the analyses that follow (cf. Mau and Burkhardt 2009; Manevska and Achterberg 2011). The underlying idea is that this variable indicates the share of immigrants in the population that are (perceived to be) culturally different and (perceived to) have different values and are consequently (perceived to be) a cultural threat to the native population (cf. Schneider 2008: 58). The mean regime scores are, however, not ranked in accordance to what is generally expected, as liberal welfare regimes have the lowest, instead of highest, share of non-western immigrants: (1) conservative (6.72), (2) social-democratic (5.55), (3) liberal (4.23).

*Ethnic diversity of immigrants* is the second indicator that will be used in order to control for ethnic heterogeneity theory. It is constructed by calculating the Herfindahl index of immigrant respondents in all four waves of the European Social Survey since 2002. In each of these waves the respondents reported their country of birth, which made it possible to measure the diversity of the immigrant population within each country. *Ethnic diversity of immigrants* indicates the mean scores of the Herfindahl indices that were calculated for these countries for each ESS wave. It ranges from 0 (perfectly ethnically homogeneous immigrant population) through 1 (perfectly ethnically heterogeneous immigrant population). As such, higher scores indicate higher levels of ethnic diversity within the immigrant population of a country. The mean regime scores of this indicator for ethnic heterogeneity theory are ranked as expected: (1) liberal (0.17), (2) conservative (0.16), (3) social-democratic (0.13).[6]

### *Individual-Level Variables*

The dependent variable *welfare chauvinism* is measured by means of the following question: "Thinking of people coming to live in [country] from other countries, when do you think they should obtain the same rights to social benefits and services as citizens already living here?" This is the best available measure for an international comparison of welfare chauvinism as conceptualized here. Unsurprisingly, the only other internationally comparative studies on welfare chauvinism we know of also utilize this question (Mewes and Mau 2012; Reeskens and Van Oorschot 2012). Its answer categories are (1) "Immediately on arrival", (2) "After living in [country] for a year, whether or not they have worked", (3) "Only after they have worked and paid taxes for at least a year", (4) "Once they have become a [country] citizen", (5) "They should never get the same rights". Please note that the wording of both the question and its answer categories indicates that this item does not focus on the desirability of welfare benefits and services

in general. Instead, the item's "specific wording … assesses Europeans' support for welfare chauvinism quite well" (Mewes and Mau 2012: 130).[7]

Unfortunately, higher scores do not validly indicate a stronger reluctance towards entitling immigrants to welfare services. There is no problem with answer categories 1, 2, 3 and 5: when placed in this specific order, higher scores stand for more welfare chauvinism. Category 4, however, does not fit into this pattern: it addresses the legal status of immigrants – citizens versus non-citizens – which is substantially different. Furthermore, the conditions that need to be met in order to gain citizenship vary widely among European countries, which severely hampers international comparability of this answer category (cf. Mewes and Mau 2012: 130–131). Therefore, we have left answer category 4 out of our measurement of welfare chauvinism: we have recoded categories 1 to 3 and 5 into 1 to 3 and 4 respectively. A higher score on this variable thus indicates a stronger resistance toward entitling immigrants to welfare.

To properly test our hypotheses, we need to control for compositional effects. Therefore, the analyses include the following individual-level indicators.

We control for level of education because it has been found numerous times that education affects attitudes towards ethnic minorities and immigrants (Emler and Frazer 1999). *Education* is measured as the minimum number of years of schooling needed to attain the highest level of education achieved by the respondent.

Income needs to be controlled for, too, because one's economic position affects one's attitudes towards economic redistribution (Van der Waal et al. 2007). The variable *income* indicates respondents' total household income, after tax and compulsory deductions. It is measured in deciles of the actual household income range in the country in which the respondents reside. A higher score indicates a higher income level.

As previous research demonstrates that the unemployed (Houtman et al. 2008) and those dependent on welfare (Van der Waal et al. 2010) tend to favor economic redistribution, the analyses that follow will also control for respondents' *unemployment* and *welfare dependency*. For *unemployment* we have coded respondents who were unemployed and looking for a job at the time of the interview as "2" and those who were not as "1". For *welfare dependency* we have coded respondents not dependent on welfare as "1" and those who are welfare dependent as "2".

Finally, we include the control variables *female* (male = 1; female = 2), because women are generally more inclined to support welfare arrangements than men are, and *age* (in years), as the elderly are more inclined to such support than the young (Koster 2010).

## Results

Before assessing whether Larsen's (2006) branch of institutional theory can account for different levels of welfare chauvinism in different welfare regimes, we have first explored the differences in welfare chauvinism between welfare regimes by calculating the share of the native population stating that immigrants should never get the same rights. The results are in accordance with our expectations: the percentage is 11.7 in liberal regimes, 9.3 in conservative ones and 3.6 in social-democratic regimes.

Of course, this merely provides a first indication. For assessing and explaining welfare regime differences in welfare chauvinism, ordered-logit multilevel analyses are needed, the results of which are displayed in Table 1. Because we can use only a limited number of countries, we will not introduce the explanatory variables all at once when testing our

**Table 1.** Multilevel ordered logit regression analyses with dependent variable welfare chauvinism of 9,381 natives in 10 European countries in 2008 (method: maximum likelihood, entries are ordered log-odds regression coefficients, standard errors in parentheses)

| | Null model | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 | Model 10 | Model 11 | Model 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Individual-level variables* | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Education | | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.090*** | −0.089*** | −0.090*** |
| | | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.006) |
| Income | | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.002 | −0.003 | −0.002 |
| | | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Unemployed | | 0.052 | 0.050 | 0.049 | 0.052 | 0.052 | 0.052 | 0.050 | 0.053 | 0.052 | 0.050 | 0.049 | 0.041 |
| | | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) | (0.133) |
| Welfare dependent | | 0.199 | 0.201 | 0.202 | 0.199 | 0.199 | 0.202 | 0.195 | 0.202 | 0.199 | 0.203* | 0.197 | 0.204* |
| | | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) | (0.102) |
| Female | | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.047 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.045 | −0.046 | −0.044 |
| | | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) | (0.042) |
| Age | | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.002 |
| | | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) |
| *Country-level variables* | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Liberal (ref.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conservative | | | −0.535 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | (0.271) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social-democratic | | | −1.221** | −0.899** | | | | | | | −0.571 | −0.274 | −0.421 |
| | | | (0.250) | (0.222) | | | | | | | (0.316) | (0.260) | (0.277) |
| Share non-western immigrants | | | | | −0.082 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | (0.077) | | | | | | | | |
| Ethnic diversity immigrants | | | | | | 2.379 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | (4.645) | | | | | | | |
| Selectivity | | | | | | | 0.083** | | | | 0.041 | | |

(*continued*)

**Table 1.** (*Continued*)

| | Null model | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 | Model 9 | Model 10 | Model 11 | Model 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | (0.022) | | | | (0.030) | | |
| Inequality I (Gini) | | | | | | | | 0.122*** | | | | 0.096* | |
| | | | | | | | | (0.020) | | | | (0.031) | |
| Inequality II (80/20 ratio) | | | | | | | | | 0.782*** | | | | 0.519 |
| | | | | | | | | | (0.165) | | | | (0.228) |
| Unemployment | | | | | | | | | | 0.127 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | (0.088) | | | |
| Strictness employment protection | | | | | | | | | | −0.127 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | (0.155) | | | |
| Variance country level | 0.300 | 0.320 | 0.084 | 0.118 | 0.287 | 0.312 | 0.133 | 0.066 | 0.095 | 0.255 | 0.099 | 0.059 | 0.076 |

*Notes:* * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$

hypotheses: the relevance of each explanatory dimension will be tested separately – we first determine whether the effect of a certain dimension is statistically significant, and if this is the case, we test whether it is responsible for differences in welfare chauvinism among welfare regimes. It should, however, be noted that the limited number of countries does not rule out multilevel modeling. As Gelman and Hill (2007: 275) observe in their authoritative work on the subject:

> Advice is sometimes given that multilevel models can only be used if the number of groups is higher than some threshold … Such advice is misguided … When sample sizes are small (…) it should still work at least as well as classical regression.



The null model shows that there is a significant multilevel structure in the data, and model 1 introduces the individual-level control variables. Controlling for this composition effect, model 2 demonstrates that the differing levels of welfare chauvinism across welfare regimes that were found above are less salient if individual-level socio-economic background characteristics are taken into account: natives in social-democratic welfare regimes are less welfare chauvinistic than natives in liberal welfare regimes, but those in conservative ones are not. Hence, strictly speaking, there are two instead of three worlds of welfare chauvinism, as shown in our adjusted baseline model (model 3), in which liberal and conservative regimes are combined into a single reference category, so as to minimize the number of country-level variables.

Before testing our hypotheses, we assess whether differences in ethnic heterogeneity can explain differences in welfare chauvinism. Models 4 and 5 indicate that this is not the case: neither of the two variables used to measure ethnic heterogeneity (share of non-western immigrants and ethnic diversity of immigrants) has a significant effect on welfare chauvinism, even though the latter's regime scores are in line with ethnic heterogeneity theory. This indicates that in testing our hypotheses, we will not find spurious effects caused by regime differences in ethnic heterogeneity.

Model 6 addresses our first hypothesis, which holds that differences in welfare chauvinism can be explained by differences in the selectivity of welfare regimes. Selectivity does, indeed, have a significant effect in the expected direction: in countries with the most selective welfare regimes, the native population is most welfare chauvinistic.

Models 7 and 8 both address our second hypothesis, which relates to the inequality dimension and states that differences in welfare chauvinism can be explained by differences in income inequality among welfare regimes. The analyses show that in countries that display more income inequality, measured with either the Gini coefficient or the 80/20 ratio, natives consider immigrants to be less entitled to welfare than in countries characterized by lower levels of income inequality.

Having established this, we turn to the part of the institutional theory of welfare attitudes that deals with the labor-market trajectory. On the basis of this theory, we expect that differences in welfare chauvinism can be explained by differences in unemployment levels (*hypothesis 3*) and by differences in the strictness of employment protection (*hypothesis 4*). Model 9, however, indicates that neither of those hypotheses stands the test: the effects of unemployment and strictness of employment protection are not significant. In countries with low levels of unemployment or unregulated employment relations, the native population does not consider immigrants more or less entitled to welfare than in countries with high levels of unemployment or more regulated employment relations.

In order to determine whether selectivity and inequality not only have an effect on welfare chauvinism, but are also responsible for the observed differences in welfare chauvinism between the social-democratic welfare regimes on the one hand and the liberal and conservative ones on the other, we have to conduct two additional analyses. The first one is depicted in model 10, where the regime dummy for the social-democratic welfare regimes and selectivity are entered simultaneously. Although the coefficient of the regime dummy in this model is no longer significant, this cannot be attributed to the low level of selectivity in the social-democratic regimes, as the coefficient of selectivity is not significant either.

The low levels of inequality in those regimes can, however, explain their low levels of welfare chauvinism. This is shown in model 11, where the effect of wage inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, takes over the effect of the social-democratic regime dummy that was found in our baseline model. Strictly speaking, the other measure of wage inequality, the 80/20 ratio, does not yield the same result as its coefficient is not significant at the 5 per cent level (model 12). It needs to be emphasized, however, that it is close to being so ($p = 0.057$). All in all, the last three models indicate that the lower levels of welfare chauvinism in social-democratic regimes as compared to liberal and conservative ones can be attributed to the low levels of income inequality in the former ones.



## Conclusion and Discussion

Drawing on literature demonstrating that three worlds of welfare capitalism have resulted in three worlds of public support for the poor and the unemployed (Larsen 2006, 2008), we expected to find three worlds of welfare chauvinism. Strictly speaking, however, our analyses indicate that there are two, instead of three, worlds of welfare chauvinism: the native populations of liberal and conservative welfare regimes are more reluctant to entitle immigrants to welfare than those living under social-democratic regimes. This pattern is in line with the institutional theorizing on welfare attitudes. We therefore formulated hypotheses for testing whether a specific branch of institutional theory, developed by Larsen by combining insights from previous theorizing on the welfare state (most notably by Marshall 1950; Titmuss 1968, 1974; Van Oorschot 2000; Myles and Quadagno 2002), can account for it.

Not all hypotheses derived from this theory have been corroborated. First, we hypothesized that welfare regimes that are most selective, that is, regimes in which welfare services are "means-tested", result in high levels of welfare chauvinism. Our findings indeed point in that direction: high levels of selectivity yield high levels of welfare chauvinism. Contrary to our expectations this cannot, however, account for the low levels of welfare chauvinism in social-democratic regimes. This needs to be interpreted with care, as our analysis uses a rather crude measure of selectivity (cf. Gilbert 2009). Therefore, if suitable and more fine-grained data become available for countries that can be categorized according to Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes, these should be used in order to test the robustness of these results.

Second, the different labor-market trajectories brought about by the different welfare regimes do not affect the level of welfare chauvinism at all. Neither the unemployment level nor the strictness of employment regulation has any impact on the degree to which native populations consider immigrants to be entitled to welfare benefits and services. These results suggest that differences in welfare chauvinism are not related to differences in (perceptions

of) the extent to which immigrants are considered to be in need of welfare or to the extent to which they are considered to be in control of their own labor-market situation.

Things are different, however, when it comes to the inequality brought about by welfare regimes. Our analyses indicate that higher levels of income inequality go hand in hand with higher levels of welfare chauvinism. This suggests that less diverging lifestyles between the rich and the poor lead to more understanding towards (potential) immigrant welfare recipients among majority populations. Put differently, in more unequal societies the rich are more likely to consider minority groups deviant, and therefore less entitled to welfare. Importantly, this relationship between income inequality and welfare chauvinism can account for the different levels of welfare chauvinism between welfare regimes: the native populations in social-democratic welfare regimes consider immigrants most entitled to welfare because of the low levels of income inequality. Thus, one of the three regime dimensions around which the institutional theory of welfare attitudes under scrutiny revolves can explain the existence of two worlds of welfare chauvinism.

In addition, it needs to be noted that it is very unlikely that two dominant *non*-institutional theories on welfare attitudes can account for the existence of two worlds of welfare chauvinism. First, we have included two measures to control for the theory of ethnic heterogeneity (Alesina and Glaeser 2004), neither of which had any effect. This indicates that the level of welfare chauvinism does not differ among welfare regimes because of differences in levels of solidarity brought about by differences in ethnic heterogeneity.

Second, our findings indicate that "ethnic competition theory" (Olzak, 1992) – which suggests that welfare chauvinism is inspired by a desire to exclude ethnic outgroups in a competition over scarce welfare entitlements – is also an unlikely candidate for explaining regime differences in welfare chauvinism. The high levels of welfare chauvinism in regimes characterized by a higher level of income inequality might, at first sight, also be interpreted in accordance with this theory, as interethnic struggle for welfare entitlements is fiercer if there is a more pronounced economic underclass. Yet, national-level unemployment, which is a more valid indicator for testing ethnic competition theory as it measures the need for welfare assistance more directly, does not have a significant positive effect on welfare chauvinism. This suggests that differences in ethnic competition are not responsible for different levels of welfare chauvinism in different welfare regimes. This suggestion is substantiated by our control variables at the individual level: neither unemployment nor welfare dependency has any effect whatsoever, indicating that welfare chauvinism is not inspired by ethnic competition over scare welfare resources (cf. Van der Waal et al. 2010). In short, neither a cultural nor an economic non-institutional theory of welfare chauvinism seems to be able to provide an alternative explanation for the existence of two worlds of welfare chauvinism.

In addition to our findings, the explanatory value of the institutional theory on welfare attitudes addressed warrants further scrutiny for three reasons. As these go far beyond the scope of the present study, future research needs to bring additional insights. First, the formulation of the commonly used dependent variable is rather broad: it deals with social benefits and services without further specification. In line with institutional reasoning, it can be expected that the extent to which immigrants are considered entitled depends on the nature of the services and benefits involved. Therefore, future research could benefit from more fine-grained measures addressing various types of welfare services and benefits. Second, other policies might also affect the perceived entitlement of immigrants among the public at large. The two most salient ones for the question at hand seem to be multiculturalism policies, which are discussed by Banting and Kymlicka (2006), and

immigration regimes (cf. Sainsbury 2006). Both affect the extent to and the way in which immigrants are institutionally incorporated and might therefore affect the welfare chauvinism of the native population. Third, in light of institutional theory and our findings, remarkable differences have occurred across social-democratic welfare regimes in recent years. Denmark practically installed a two-tier welfare system, in which immigrants have less access to welfare benefits and services than the native population, while Sweden and Norway did not. As Bay and colleagues (2013) demonstrated – in accordance with our findings – this occurred while the level of welfare chauvinism among the public at large hardly differs among those countries. They indicate that electoral competition, as well as agenda setting and mobilization by right-wing populist parties in Denmark, are key to understanding these differences across social-democratic regimes (Bay et al. 2013). Future research on the impact of institutions on welfare opinions could gain from this insight: welfare institutions that foster high levels of solidarity can go hand in hand with exclusive policies due to political processes.

All that said, we would like to conclude with discussing the relevance of our findings in the policy domain. Although we are not the first to demonstrate that institutions affect the welfare opinions of the people, the insight that institutions matter in this respect is highly salient for those who consider the existence of exclusionary sentiments as worrying in itself. We have demonstrated that egalitarian policies and institutions can help in fighting such sentiments. Our results indicate that strengthening policies and institutions aimed at reducing income inequality can be utilized for that cause.

Furthermore, inspired by Alesina and Glaeser (2006), it is often assumed that the ethnic heterogeneity stemming from immigration in Europe in recent decades undermines the solidarity that is needed for extensive welfare states. A combination of high levels of ethnic heterogeneity and high levels of solidarity is therefore deemed impossible. Our findings, however, indicate that such a "progressive dilemma" (Banting 2010), is by no means inevitable: our heterogeneity measures had no effect on welfare chauvinism whatsoever. This is a salient finding, because one might expect that if ethnic heterogeneity indeed hampered solidarity, the most likely type of solidarity to be negatively affected would be solidarity towards ethnic others, such as immigrants. Our analyses, however, indicate that this is not the case. High levels of ethnic heterogeneity and solidarity can therefore go hand in hand, which is a vital insight for academics and policymakers alike.

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**Notes**

1. The concept is sometimes used differently. Crepaz and Damron (2009), for instance, label concerns over the potential detrimental effects of immigration on the welfare state and employment opportunities of natives as "welfare chauvinism". Note that this is not how welfare chauvinism is conceptualized here. The sentiments assessed by Crepaz and Damron are commonly denoted as (perceived) ethnic threat, ethnocentrism, or anti-immigrant attitudes.
2. See note 1.

3. While the Netherlands is considered an ambiguous welfare regime (cf. Goodin and Smitsman 2000), it should be noted that "in terms of welfare *state* structures and the living conditions of potentially poor, the country holds the most in common with the social democratic regimes" (Larsen 2007: 84, italics in original). In response to a query made by an anonymous reviewer, we have, however, also performed the analyses with the Netherlands categorized as a conservative regime. This also leads to a rejection of hypotheses 1, 3 and 4, and a corroboration of hypothesis 2. The corroboration of hypothesis 2 is even somewhat more convincing, as both inequality indicators can account for regime differences in welfare chauvinism in these analyses (available upon request).
4. Because Scruggs's instrument is rather crude, we also performed analyses with the selectivity measure available through *Social Citizenship Indicator Program* (SCIP) (Korpi and Palme 2008). This has been recommended by Larsen (2006: 73), who conducted his research when this data source was not yet available. There is, however, hardly any variance on this measure, and the regime scores are not in accordance with Larsen's theory. It therefore does not surprise that it does not affect welfare chauvinism at all (analyses available upon request).
5. For details, see: http://www.oecd.org/employment/protection (accessed September 30, 2010).
6. We thank Ferry Koster for generously sharing his calculations.
7. An anonymous reviewer asked whether our analyses allow disentangling welfare chauvinism and a more general preference for fewer social benefits and services for citizens (that is, regardless of whether a citizen is an immigrant or not). In order to control for the degree to which one desires social benefits and services in general, we have replicated our analyses while controlling for economic egalitarianism. This does not lead to meaningfully different results: again, hypothesis 2 is corroborated and hypotheses 1, 3 and 4 are rejected (analyses available upon request).

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